The Gentlemen Wool Merchants and Serge-makers CASE.

Shewing,

THE Ingroſſing the Wool of *Ireland* into private Hands, projected by ſome particular Factors upon Commiſſion for Foreigners, is highly prejudicial to the publick Trade of the Nation, will keep down the price of *Engliſh* Wool, and leſſen the value of our Lands in *England*, by cauſing the Rents to fall.

Theſe Sergebuyers Factors to Foreigners upon the Credit of their great and large Commiſſions, draw all the Sergemakers about the Country to court them for a Market and Sale of their Serges, which they take in from the Country at their own Rates and Prices, commonly without any certain Price, or fixed time of payment. And thereby theſe Factors have generally in their Hands very great Sums of the Country's Mony (that is, value in Serges) for which they neither give Bill nor Bond. The Sergemaker having no other ſo certain and ready Market to depend upon, are miſerably awed and ſubjected to theſe great Factors, that they dare not diſpute or ask for Mony in four, five, ſix, or eight Months time; and can rarely get enough to ſupport the poor Labourer, the Comber and Spinner with daily Bread; but now ſome few of theſe Factors are not content and ſatisfied with this great and profitable Commiſſion Trade, and the Credit of forty or fifty thouſand Pounds of the Country's Mony in their Hands at a time, without giving Bill or Bond for the ſame, as is above ſet forth. But they proceed further, to imploy and ſettle Factors of their own in the Kingdom of *Ireland*, particularly in the chief Cities and Towns of Trade, as in *Dublin*, *Corke*, *Waterford*, &c. to ingroſs and buy up all the Wool in that Kingdom they can lay their Hands upon, which they import into *England*, and impoſe upon the Sergemakers they owe Mony to for their Serges, *6d.* *8d.* **12***d.* *per* Stone, and more above the Market Price; So that by this Method and Practice, in Fact they buy up Serges here in *England* upon Credit without Mony, and Wool in *Ireland* with the Country's Mony: The Iriſh Bills of Exchange being anſwered and payed in *London* by the Foreign Bills remitted them for Serges. Thus the poor Sergemaker is ſhamefully abuſed, being forced to take Wool after a ſtrange manner, bought with his own Mony, which they privately pack up, and ſend about the Country, to the poor ſort of Sergemakers Houſes, who muſt take it, and dare not refuſe it in what condition ſoever, wet or damnified, as oftentimes it happens to be: By this evil Practice they break and foreſtall the Staple Markets. And to further and force this unfair Trade, they ſeldom will buy Serges from any, but thoſe that will take Wool from them; their common Anſwer being, your Serges do not ſmell of my Wool: So that the Sergemaker dares not buy a lock of Wool from any Body but them. And the poorer ſort at leaſt (whoſe whole Stocks lie in their Hands) has command of neither Mony, nor Bill, to buy as formerly from the Gentleman and Farmer, or to come to the Staple Ports and open fair Markets, where great quantities of Wool are always to be bought at current Price: And it muſt be obſerved, the breaking the ancient Staple Ports and Markets for Wool, and letting it thus fall into private Hands, more eſpecially into Mens Hands that are in the Intereſt of Foreigners, whoſe buſineſs is to buy up Serges as cheap as they can, his Commiſſion being greateſt that can ſerve their Intereſt beſt and buy cheapeſt. This, with humble Submiſſion, if rightly conſider'd, muſt appear a Miſchief of the higheſt Conſequence to the Trade of this Kingdom, and perfectly deſtructive to every Gentleman and Farmer's Sale of his Wool And if the Cauſes of the preſent low and dead Price of Wool be nicely inquired into, There does not appear a greater than theſe Sergebuyers ingroſſing, private Selling, Foreſtalling, forcing and breaking the open fair Markets; and allowing but other Markets for Cattle, &c. to be ſo broke, forced, and foreſtalled; every Gentleman would ſoon feel the Conſequence; and ſurely no particular Commodity ought more to be preſerved than the noble Staple of Wool this Kingdom ſo juſtly values herſelf upon.

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This Evil being grown to that pitch and heighth in three Years time, that no Merchant that is not a Serge-buyer and Wool-Trucker as themſelves can deal in Wool but to loſs, being perfectly beat out of the ancient Trade and Way of living both in *England* and *Ireland*, and to become Agents to theſe Men to their Mortification.

So that it is evident theſe ſort of Men muſt have the whole Market for *Iriſh* Wool to themſelves, which is a great Quantity, and of a vaſt Value: And of conſequence the prices both of Wool and Serges will be in a very little time intirely in their Power, if not prevented.

The Ingroſſing the Wool of *Ireland* (upon a quite different purpoſe, *viz.* to advance and keep up the Price of *Engliſh* Wool) has been attempted by ſeveral Bodies of Men, but was always found too big to be maſter'd whilſt the Markets were kept open. But now by this Foreign Aſſiſtance and Method it is to be done, and is already in a great meaſure effected.

2. Theſe Serge-buyers and Wool-Truckers getting ſo very conſiderably by the Wool they diſpoſe off after that manner, they can ſerve the Foreigner much cheaper than any other Factor and Serge-buyer that is not concerned in Wool, which makes them all very uneaſie, and to declare publickly, that they muſt likewiſe come into the Wool-trucking Trade too, or lay down their Commiſſions. And yet notwithſtanding it may not be amiſs to obſerve, that theſe Men in Prudence (altho' they wiſh heartily a ſtop may be put to this Practice) are afraid to appear to proſecute this matter in Parliament, leaſt they ſhould by theſe Wool Trucking Merchants be repreſented Enemies to the Intereſt and Profit of thoſe Foreigners they have Imploys from, and ſo loſe their Commiſſions. And the poorer ſort of Serge-makers, whoſe whole Stocks are in their Hands, lie under a greater fear of being more oppreſs'd if they ſhould appear and the Deſign not ſucceed and take effect.

The Continuance of this Trucking Trade will force the Serge-maker to make deceitful trucking Goods, to the Diſcredit of the Manufactory, or leave off the Trade. And the Gentleman and Farmer in a ſhort time muſt come to the Serge-buyer for a Market for their Wool at his Price.

The Grievance of this trucking Trade in other Caſes having already been cenſured, condemned, and provided againſt by a Law, it is conceived that matter needs not again in this Paper to be inlarged upon. But only to obſerve, That notwithſtanding there is ſtill a ſort of Men amongſt us, that for their own private Intereſt would unmercifully oppreſs and inſlave Mankind were it in their Power.

To conclude therefore, hoping what has been offered (tho' a great deal remains to be ſaid) may be ſuffieient to convince the World this Project wholly tends to the Ruine of our Trade, the Inſlaving and Impoveriſhing our People, and the Intereſt and Benefit of Foreign Nations.

All which is humbly Submitted to the Wiſdom of the Nation.